A

MISSIONARY SERMON,

PREACHED BY THE

APPOINTMENT OF HOPEWELL PRESBYTERY,

AT ITS

SESSIONS IN SPARTA, 11th, APRIL, 1846.

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A MISSIONARY SERMON.

"*Sanctify them through thy Truth; Thy Word is Truth.*"—*John*, 17: 17.

It has become trite to say, and yet it cannot be too often repeated, that the Bible is the great and indispensable instrument for the promotion of pure morals in the world. All other means, however promising in appearance, and however confidently relied upon, have utterly failed, whenever they have been employed apart from the Bible. It is the instrumentality which God has appointed to make men virtuous and happy. To this all must betake themselves, who would permanently benefit their fellow-men.

There are many, we know, who do not believe a syllable of this. They deride the notion that the Bible is essential to the high moral elevation of our race. They go further, and boldly deny the fact declared by the Savior in the text, that this *word is truth.* Within the last seventy years, the energies of many well-disciplined and cultivated minds have been most zealously employed against the word of God. These men boasted that they could overthrow it. In this enterprize the utmost that learning, and science, and wit, and buffoonry, could accomplish, was tried. These efforts seemed, for awhile, to prosper. It was a dark time. Even the friends of the Bible, through the weakness of their faith, were alarmed. The enemies of religion conceived the most sanguine hopes of success. They imagined that the entire edifice of christianity was reeling and ready to fall into ruins under the force of their repeated blows. It was often, and with exulting confidence, predicted by them, *that the nineteenth century would witness the extinction of the name and cause of Christ;* and that the Bible would be consigned, by universal consent, to the merited doom of a detected imposture. Such were their predictions and anticipations. Well, it is our privilege to live in the nineteenth century. Almost half of it is gone, and we are in circumstances to judge concerning the degree of credit due to these predictions. Certain it is, they are not yet accomplished, and there is no likelihood of their being fulfilled in future. As prophets, they stand discredited. Their fierce assaults upon the word of God are now matters of history. They hurled all the weapons that talent and genius, and malice could supply. The conflict is over, and we are witnesses of the result. Not a single stone, in the foundation of the Church, has been so much as loosened. The Bible sustained the shock without

having—we will not say one of its *books*, or one of its *chapters* discredited—but without having one of its more than thirty thousand *verses* brought into doubt. These opposers of revelation set out, with sanguine hopes, to prove the Bible to be a tissue of falsehoods, but they utterly failed to show the existence of a single material error: This is certainly a most wonderful result of all the mighty labors of infidelity—a result, as a fine writer has remarked, "*immense by its nothingness, and almighty in its impotence.*"* The enemies of inspiration have, in this way, been the unwilling instruments of showing that the Bible is distinguished from every other book, by its containing "truth without any mixture of error:" no error in its prophecies—none in its histories—none in relation to God or man, the past or the future. "It is a book," as the author already quoted observes, "which speaks of every thing, which describes nature, which recounts its grandeurs, which narrates its creation, which tells us of the formation of the heavens, the light, the waters, the atmosphere, the mountains, the animals and the plants; it is a book which teaches us the first revolutions of the world, and which also predicts to us the last; it is a book which speaks of the celestial and invisible world, and at the same time of the earth and things visible; it is a book to which nearly fifty writers, of every degree of cultivation, of every state, of every condition, and separated by fifteen hundred years from one another, have successively contributed; it is a book which carries its descriptions even to the plains of the invisible world, even to the hierarchies of angels, even to the most remote periods of the future, and to the glorious scenes of the last day:" and yet its opposers, with all the lights of learning and philosophy, searching eagerly for errors, have found none. This is a most precious result for the Church of God. The labors of her enemies, designed for the overthrow of her faith, and the extinction of her hopes, have only served to corroborate the declaration of the text, "*Thy word is Truth.*"

On the field of argument the Bible has gloriously triumphed. The time and circumstances of those assaults are remarkable. It was when the opposers of the truth had every possible advantage; for God always gives his enemies every advantage which they can have in their conflicts with him. They shall never be allowed to ascribe their defeat to any want of those means on which they rely. In this case, it was on reason, and learning, and influence,

*Gaussen, on the inspiration of the Bible.

that reliance was placed; and, therefore, infidelity had been permitted to draw to its support a large proportion of the talent, and learning, and influence of the age. The Church was never apparently weaker—never more unprepared for such an attack. It seems to have been the design of her Almighty Head to have his truth subjected to that fiery ordeal, just as the time drew near for its universal diffusion. Just then was commenced an aggressive movement on the powers of darkness, which shall go on, with increasing energy and success, "until the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." Just then, when infidelity was exultingly predicting the speedy overthrow of the Scriptures, God was preparing the way for the spread of the Gospel through the world. Then it was, God spake the word, and Bible Societies, and Missionary Societies, and Tract Societies, and other kindred institutions, sprang up, like hosts of ministering angels, and began to pour the light of revelation through the thick darkness of the moral world. The Bible was freed from all suspicion of error. Every charge against it had been disproved. The Church could now give it to the world, with the clearest evidence of its being the truth of God. And in that protracted struggle the heart of the Church was prepared for the work of distribution. She was, in that trial, made to feel more the preciousness and power of divine truth—to love it more; and, loving it, she could not withhold it from others. The results are already most cheering. The horizon already brightens with the dawning light of the Millennial glory. Instead of the extinction of the cause of Christ, if the signs of the times do not greatly deceive us, this century will witness its universal triumph.

It has been our privilege to come into the Church when this movement was in progress. The object is simple, yet grand. It is to go into all the world, to every nation and tribe, and preach the Gospel to every creature. This is the Missionary work of the Church. This enterprize has divine assurance of success. "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters fill the sea." There are no caverns, in the whole extent of the ocean's bed, which are not penetrated and filled with its water. So there are no dark recesses in the moral world, no obscure habitation of man, no darkened mind, which shall not be illuminated with the light of the glorious Gospel.

It has been made my duty to address you, my brethren, with special reference to our Domestic Missions. It is convenient to use the terms Foreign and Domestic in relation to this work, but it

should be borne in mind that our Savior said, "*The field is the world.*" The Gospel belongs to the whole world. It has respect, not to nations, but to individual man, wherever found. Yet there is peculiar obligation resting upon us to supply those who are near us with the "bread of life."

Having special reference to the supply of the destitute in our land, I shall notice a few considerations, which, I think, ought to enlist the energies of every true friend of the Church, and of the country, in this cause.

The first consideration, which I mention, is the declaration of the text, "*Thy word is truth.*"

There are no agencies more to be dreaded, none which produce so large an amount of evil, even in this world, as errors. The time, probably, has never been, when errors were more rife, or more productive of evil than the present. They sweep over our land like a flood, threatening to destroy whatever is good and fair. The only remedy is the truth, which the Church possesses. We profess to value the Bible because it *is true*. Because it is true, the knowledge of it is essential to all that is valuable to men as immortal beings. Then, surely, we ought to circulate it. We ought not to rest—no one, who believes the christian religion to be true, ought to remain idle—while any intelligent creature, near or remote, is destitute of it.

They, who prize truths of any kind, generally evince a desire to make them known to others. All truths are probably beneficial; and a sincere *love of truth* is a benevolent feeling which produces efforts to circulate it. It is so in regard to truths connected with the secular interests of men. We may take, for illustration, the important subject of agriculture. Zeal for agricultural improvements is one of the distinguishing marks of the present age. The cause is worthy of the zeal. New truths on this subject are almost daily brought to light. Every real friend of this cause desires that all knowledge in regard to it shall be widely circulated; and the efforts made to accomplish this reflect great honor on many of our citizens. It would be deemed intolerable selfishness in any class of men, should they oppose the general circulation of these truths, in which all are interested, and by which all might be benefitted. The idea would not be tolerated that these should be confined to our neighborhood, or state, or country. All would say, they belong not to any one section of the world, but to all men, in every place, where land is to be cultivated and wants to be supplied. I speak in the presence of many who feel a lively interest in this

matter, and who have generously contributed to the diffusion of knowledge to promote agricultural improvement.

We might take, for further illustration, truths in political science. We, in this favored country, suppose that we possess knowledge in regard to human rights, civil and religious liberty, which, if it were diffused abroad, would greatly benefit the world. Now all men who love this liberty, and place a proper estimate on this knowledge of our rights, must desire, if they be friends of man, to have these benefits extended, this knowledge diffused, far and wide among the oppressed nations.

In these matters men act upon right principles. They manifest kind and generous feeling, true benevolence. They would not confine, within *any* limits, truths which might benefit others. Let them be circulated, they say, and diffused like the light.

So say we of the truths which the Bible contains. They belong to no section of the world, but to every place, where there is a human mind to be influenced by them. Let them be freely circulated, sent abroad, to illuminate every dark place in our land and world. There is not, in all truth, any thing so important to be known by the whole world as the fact that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Impart all other truth; yet, if this be withheld, the teeming millions of the earth's population will perish. Eternal interests are at stake in this matter. Hence, haste is needed. Other truths may be left to work their way among the nations by the slow process of ordinary means. No other than temporal interests can suffer by delay. But as the salvation of immortal souls depends on the spread of the gospel, extraordinary means are demanded. Messengers must be sent. Heralds must go forth into all the world to publish to every creature the glad tidings of a Saviour.

The acknowledged influence of the Bible on the welfare of society in this world, furnishes another consideration to induce the friends of religion to make every possible effort to supply every neighborhood in our land with the preached Gospel. It is only by means of the Bible, read in all our families, and expounded and enforced by the living ministry, that the worst forms of evil can be averted from the land, and the purest blessings secured.

There are some things, calling for a great increase of religious and moral influence, which demand the profound and earnest attention of every christian and philanthropist. One is the astonishing multiplication and augmented power of the physical agencies, which are now made to subserve the interests of the present

life. All are amazed at the mighty changes, in these respects, which have been wrought in the last few years. The young among us have witnessed the origin of many of them. Discoveries in the various departments of science, new inventions in machinery, and improved methods of applying the mechanical powers, in aid of human industry and skill, are rapidly changing the aspect of the world. Scientific investigations are not mere speculations for the gratification of the curious. The tendency of all these is eminently practical. Science, herself, has become utilitarian. She has become the powerful auxiliary of man in all the pursuits of life. The necessaries and comforts of all classes are increased in amount, while the labor requisite to produce them is constantly diminishing. One does now, with ease, what heretofore required the toil of hundreds to accomplish. The most powerful agencies of the material world are lending their aid. They have become the servants of man, and yield their resistless energies to his control. They are surmounting the barriers which have heretofore impeded the intercourse of men, and are bearing people and merchandize over sea and land with a speed that is capable of indefinite increase. The burdens of labor are thus lightened, and the comforts and conveniences of life are multiplied every hour. No one is able to assign any limit, beyond which these improvements cannot be carried. The astounding fact that the lightning of heaven is made the vehicle of man's thoughts, the bearer of intelligence from city to city, may be regarded only as an earnest of what the human mind may yet achieve, in controlling the elements around us, and in rendering them subservient to the interests of man.

We stand at almost the very commencement of these great changes in the modes and instrumentalities, by which the business of the world is now carried on. The novelty has scarcely worn off. But of one thing we may be certain; these improvements will be permanent. The world will never fall below its present attainments in physical means. These mighty agencies will continue to the end of time. Their efficiency will be augmented from age to age; and they will be applied in a thousand ways, not yet thought of, to mitigate the toil of labor, and to furnish increasing supplies for the wants of the human family. It is for christians and philanthropists to consider how all this speed and power, these immense facilities in every department of business, these means of physical prosperity, can be rendered a blessing to the world. The anxious inquiry arises in many minds, as the progress and tendency of these

things are contemplated, "*Will they be a blessing or a curse?*" This, it is obvious, will depend on the direction which is given to them, and the spirit with which they shall be employed; and this will depend on the degree in which the Bible shall exert its restraining and purifying influences on the great mass of mind. To this point the attention of christians should be earnestly directed. The Church is still "the salt of the earth." If the influence of our holy religion shall not be increased and extended, in proportion as physical causes are multiplied and brought into operation, then there is much reason to fear—yea, it is certain—that all this boasted augmentation of power will be no blessing to the world. There will be the appearance of a greater temporal prosperity. Labor and enterprize will be more successful. Whatever ministers to pride and to sensual indulgence, will be more easily acquired. But all this, without a corresponding moral influence, is to be dreaded. These instrumentalities are efficient for purposes of evil, as well as for purposes of good. In the absence of the religion of the Bible, they will not subserve the real interests of men; but on the contrary, will add tenfold energy to the corruption that is in the world. It is, then, the great and urgent duty of all christians to take care that the means of moral elevation and improvement shall be multiplied and extended, in proportion to the increase of physical agencies through the world. It is for christians to see to it, that the healthful influence of religion shall keep pace fully with the progress of temporal advantages. The highest good of our country demands this. The greatest dangers, to which we are exposed at present, arise from the want of due proportion between the moral and physical agencies, which are at work. There is an alarming lack of moral means, and, until these are furnished, we must expect evils. I urge this consideration, that we may feel more deeply the importance of the Domestic Misssionary work. The present welfare of our citizens, as well as the future happiness of men, call for increased efforts in this cause.

If I interpret correctly the movements of Divine Providence in the affairs of this world, these amazing improvements, in all the means for carrying on the business of the world, constitute a special call upon the Church for increased efforts to promote the moral and religious improvement of society. God is in all these changes and movements. The discoveries and inventions of this age, which are effecting such revolutions in the affairs of the world, and which give such a mighty impulse to all the business of men, have not sprung from the dust of the earth. He is blind,

who does not see the hand of God in them. These are among his instrumentalities for good. They are among the means by which he is conducting the world to the glorious destiny that awaits it. But he calls for the co-operation of the Church. By all these multiplied agencies around us, he is affording the greatest facilities for putting forth the moral influence that is needed to avert the evil and secure the good. It is a part of the plan of Providence to preserve this proportion between the moral and physical means, which any people may possess. Wherever there has been a great destitution of the means of moral improvement, there has been a corresponding paucity of other advantages. The condition of heathen countries affords an illustration of this. They are as destitute of the common comforts and conveniences, which christian communities possess, as they are of moral influences. The design of Providence seems to be, to withhold the physical instrumentalities, where they cannot be made to subserve the higher interests of man's moral nature. Divine benevolence is evinced in this. A different course would impart to the selfishness and malignity of men additional power for evil. It would, consequently, be no kindness to heathen nations, to impart to them all our improvements in the mechanic arts, so long as their minds are in bondage under their cruel and debasing superstitions. These improvements are destined to be spread among all people. But our religion must go first; for, without that, no *blessing* would be imparted. The Missionary and the Bible are preparing the way.

It is deeply interesting to notice how the most important discoveries and inventions, which men have made, have been connected with the spread of the Bible and the advancement of the christian religion. Every thing of this sort has occurred just at the time, when it could be made to subserve the great purpose of the divine administration, the moral improvement and happiness of men, and when moral influences were to be increased. The printing press is, undoubtedly, the instrument of the greatest power, that Providence has ever entrusted to human hands. It is one of the wonders of this world's history—not that the art of printing was discovered, but that the discovery of it was reserved to so late a period. Who can account for it, that an instrument, so simple, so much needed in the affairs of men, so likely to be suggested to an inquisitive mind, should be hid from so many ages and generations? The Providence of God, in relation to the Bible and the Church, furnishes the solution. While his Church was driven by oppression into the mountains, and the Bible was not permitted to be

read by the people, God did not require the press for his purposes. The physical would have outstript the moral power. But when the time came for the Bible to be translated, and circulated, and read, and the moral means to be greatly multiplied, *then* this mighty engine was invented. It is the means, which God has selected, to fill the earth with the knowledge of his glory.

We trace the same connection between the discoveries in science and the mechanic arts of this age, and the advancement of the cause and kingdom of Christ. Why was it reserved for the men of these days to make all these discoveries, and to possess all these extraordinary advantages? Why are we able now to apply the chemical and mechanical powers to multiply the comforts of life, so far beyond what the most sanguine of former times deemed possible? Why is it that man has so very recently learned the secret of rendering steam and electricity, the most powerful agents of the natural world, subservient to his will? Why is it that, in the *first pursuit*, to which the mind of man was directed, the cultivation of the earth, men are just now acquiring a knowledge, heretofore withheld, which enables them to impart to the soil a fertility, heretofore unknown, and to which no limit can be assigned? These are not results of chance. The reason of them is not in man. It is not, that men have just *now* acquired a degree of intellectual vigor and acuteness so far beyond others. It is not, that the ancients were inferior to the moderns, that they did not make these discoveries and secure to themselves all these advantages. We trace the origin of these to a far higher source, even the mind of God. He has presided over the genius, and skill, and inventive powers of men, and has led them to these amazing achievements, just at the time when he needed them to contribute to that prosperity and happiness, with which he has promised to bless our world in the latter days. We see in them elements of wondrous power for good. They may be employed for evil, as every instrumentality may be. The evil may predominate for a time, while the requisite religious influence on the hearts of men is wanting. So long the principal efficiency of many of these agencies may be manifested only in the aid they afford the men of the world, in the prosecution of their schemes for pleasure or gain. But they are destined for higher purposes. It may seem to some, that these physical agencies are not adapted to promote that future happiness and glory, which are yet to be attained by the nations of the earth. Some may imagine, that that will be too purely a spiritual state, to render this material agency necessary to complete the happiness of it. We take a different view of the

matter. It will, indeed, be a time of unprecedented spiritual prosperity. The religion of the Bible will exert its universal and controlling influence over the minds of men. It will be the reign of Christ in the affections of men—the reign of universal love and good will. This will be the peculiar glory of that happy period of the world. But this earth is to be the theatre of this prevalence and triumph of christianity. Here, amid the occupations and pursuits of this world, in the various relationships of life, the promised happiness will be realized. Unprecedented temporal prosperity, increased abundance of the things of this world, the universal possession of the means of moral and intellectual improvement, whatever can render enterprize successful, and labor availing, will be among the ingredients that shall contribute to the blessedness and glory of that wished-for time. It will be a time of universal peace, of universal knowledge, of universal freedom, and of universal virtue. Philosophy dreams of all this, and revelation declares it. God is showing us now by *what means* the inhabitants of the world are to realize the predicted prosperity. The leading movements of Providence are concurring to bring it to pass. The means are in the process of preparation. The most striking events are contributing to it. Agricultural improvements, adorning and fertilizing the earth, are contributing to it. All the applications of science to art are contributing to it. Steam, which is giving wings to truth and knowledge, and which promises to almost annihilate space, is contributing to it. All the powers of machinery are contributing to it. When all these instrumentalities shall have reached their destined perfection, and shall be employed by all nations, under the controlling influence of the Gospel, and all the families of the earth shall be united in one great, christian, brotherhood, then will be enjoyed *all* that prophets beheld, in vision, of glory and happiness among men.

The faith of the christian discerns a lustre in these things which is hid from others. God presided over those minds whose achievements in inventions have given a new direction to human affairs. God's Providence has always controlled these things. When he was about to have the Tabernacle erected, architectural taste and mechanical skill were needed. And it is said, "The Lord filled Bezaleel with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, and to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in the cutting of stones, to set them in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work." Such is the dependence of men on God. It is

only as He unveils the hidden agencies of nature, that man can subjugate them to his use. The controlling and directing hand of Providence is never withdrawn. The schemes of avarice are made to contribute to the advancement and triumph of christianity. There are many rich men in the world, who will not give any thing to aid, directly, in circulating the Bible, or in supporting christian Missions. Very well; God has other uses for the money which is confided to them. It requires an immense outlay of capital, in ever-during improvements, to furnish the means necessary to the prosperity and bliss of the Millennial period. He leaves it to them, in seeking profitable investments for money, to construct those works, at great expense, which will then be needed. These preparations must be expensive. Let worldly men of wealth, then, carry out their schemes, and spread their "net-work" of rail-roads over the solid earth, cover the ocean with steam-ships, fill the world with labor-saving machinery, render all the elements of nature subservient to the purposes of human existence—and they will but have arranged, and combined, and put in operation, *some* of the means, which are to contribute to the predicted happiness of the latter days. It is for christians to rejoice and be glad on account of these things. God is just showing how abundant are the resources, at his command, for the accomplishment of his purposes. They are for good. But the full extent of their capability for good will not be known, until the "earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord."

All these great events which characterize the age, and which we do not cease to regard with astonishment, have fallen in, with wonderful exactness, with the great movement of the Church for the conversion of the world. In this concurrence of the physical and moral movements, the hand of God is manifested. He who formed the moral scheme, and required his Church to execute it, prepared the necessary instruments for the work, just when they were needed, and the Church was ready to use them.

But I intimated that there is danger of evil. There is, not in these things themselves, but, as I have said before, because the influence of the religion of the Bible is not as pervading and controlling as it is designed to be. The evil, in these cases, will be temporary, the good will be permanent. The increased means of temporal prosperity has given a new impetus to the spirit of worldliness. Men make haste to get rich now with unwonted eagerness. In some cases, temptations to neglect plain duty are increased. For instance, the great speed of travel, by the power of steam, increa-

ses the temptation to violate the Sabbath. Where progress is made at the rate of twenty or thirty miles an hour, even some christians think that it is losing too much to rest on the Sabbath. The great distance that could be passed over in the time, enhances the power of the temptation. The same is true with Directors of Rail-roads, in the transportation of freight. The immense amount of business which can be done by their Engines, in a single day, makes them regard the suspension of work on the Sabbath as too great a sacrifice. Hence, they inflict a great moral injury on the community, by running these trains through the country on the Sabbath. We may hope that causes are in operation, which will correct this evil. If they have no regard to the divine command, nor to the wishes of a christian community, they may find that agents in their service, who can be hired to violate the Sabbath, and are excluded from all moral influences, will not be the fittest persons to occupy posts of such responsibility.

Whatever may be the evils attendant upon these things, the friends of religion must not be discouraged. The appointed remedy, and it is a sovereign remedy, is entrusted to the Church. Let her be faithful, and all will be well.

The only thing to be dreaded, by the christian and philanthropist, is the deficiency in moral means, that is known to exist in an alarming degree. Thousands of families are destitute of the Scriptures. The supply of the stated means of grace is far short of the demands of the country. Many portions are almost entirely destitute of them. The education of our youth, in its different stages, is not as decidedly religious as it should be. The supply of suitable books is far below the necessities of a people where education is generally diffused. These destitutions may well excite our fears. In the absence of adequate means of moral elevation and improvement, the people will be exposed to the power of every evil influence. These destitute places are the darkened theatres, on which all the agencies of error and corruption are plied. They are the most fruitful sources of evil. It is for the Church to remove them. It is for her to pour the light of truth and knowledge into all these dark places, and to put forth, in the strength of God, a moral and religious influence that shall pervade and control all the affairs of this world. She is now in a condition to do this. Hitherto, she has been organizing her forces and maturing her plans of operation. She is now in a position for the most efficient action. The great objects to be accomplished are distinctly before her, and they embrace all the moral wants of man. All physical agencies are

subjected to her use. With all these advantages, she has only to gird herself for the labor, and put forth her strength, and a full supply of means, for the moral wants of our land and world, shall be furnished. *This will be done.* The movement of the Church is onward, and there is no power, in opposing causes, to arrest it.

The pecuniary means, necessary to carry forward this great work, are abundant and increasing. A large portion of them is, indeed, yet held back. But they will be brought into use. There has been a large increase of liberality in the friends of religion. This is not the least remarkable characteristic of this age. It has changed the face of the world. It has not yet attained the height, which it is destined to reach. We have seen much already, but it is only the beginning. We shall "see greater things than these." The time, I believe, is not far distant when the *ordinary* rate of liberality will be such, that *one*, with moderate means, will do what it now requires the co-operation of many to accomplish. The difficulty, arising from a want of funds to support missionaries, or furnish the destitute with Bibles, shall cease in the Church. It cannot be doubted that there are many members in our Churches, and the number will be increased, who might each support one or more missionaries to preach the gospel to the destitute. The time for this degree of liberality, it seems, has not yet come; but it will come. The plans of God, in relation to the spread of the Gospel, will require it. Then the liberality of the Church shall be adequate to the necessities of the work. Christ has a simple and delightful method of doing this, and it never fails. It is by imparting an enlarged measure of love to himself and to his cause. This will bring the treasures of the Church to be laid at his feet. A sudden expansion of love to Christ would produce a flow of liberality, to which no limit could be set. By this simple means, our Saviour can control the resources of the world. Zacheus was as unlikely as any man to do a liberal thing; but when he had the Saviour for a guest, and breathed, for a few hours, that atmosphere of love, which his presence diffused, he became liberal and said, "Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor." In this way, giving, so far from being a burden, becomes a rich source of happiness.

This matter of *giving* holds a more important place in the religion of the Bible than even some christians seem to suppose. It is pre-eminently a system of giving. It has its origin in a gift, so great, that God could give no more. Imparting is the great business of the Church. The spirit of liberality, the spirit to give without grudging, is a christian grace. It is a disposition to be fervent-

ly prayed for as the richest gift of the Spirit. There is nothing, that God more emphatically commends, than the spirit of liberality. "*The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself. Give, and it shall be given to you. He that giveth a cup of cold water only shall in no wise lose his reward. God loveth a cheerful giver.*" Property, without the spirit to impart and do good with it, is no real blessing. As there is nothing, for which we should more earnestly pray, so there is nothing, for which we should be more thankful, than for the grace of enlarged liberality. So thought David and the people of Israel, when they contributed to the building of the temple. "*The people rejoiced for that they offered willingly. And David said, Now, therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.*" God, out of his mere bounty, first gives to us, that we may have the happiness of exercising a liberal spirit in giving it back. It is a great blessing to have the spirit of giving; and those who have the things of this world, and the disposition to do good with them, by imparting to others, enjoy the highest happiness that can be derived from them. Avarice may clamor in behalf of hoarding, as a means of happiness; and the Church, through want of the requisite liberality, may deem it rather a burden than a pleasure to give; yet, let us "remember the words" of Him, who made himself poor to enrich others; let them be engraven on our minds, and the truth of them deeply realized in our experience, "IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE."